

In an article—the first of a series he is to contribute—in the *New York Times Current History*, Sidney Webb puts the point very definitely. He describes it as "the most important of all the suggestions made by those who are in a position to know the truth about Soviet Russia"⁵¹

"It is argued that in vesting the entire conduct and control of production and distribution, not in the producers as such, whether capitalists or trade unionists, but in the representative of the community of consumers, either governmental or cooperative, the Soviet system has almost unwittingly discovered the economic secret for which the world is searching. Only the conduct of industry by the consumers—who, as such, are not profit-makers—ensures an unhampered devotion to an unlimited increase of production and lowering of price. Only this control by the consumers (who as such have no interest in speculation or finance) allows escape from the altering booms and slumps of competitive industry. Only where the whole of production and distribution is undertaken by representatives of the consumers can the entire body of workers—whose standards will be safeguarded by their trade unions—be secured against periodical mass unemployment, which no trade unionism can obviate.

On the economic argument it seems as if, in Soviet Russia, there need never be any involuntary unemployment. The consumers demands, with a continual rise in the standard of life, will, each year, outstrip the output of the producers. The very basis of the system, the continuous payment at prescribed rates of wages for work or training to the whole able-bodied population, automatically ensures an effective demand that can be counted on in its aggregate amount for the whole of each year."

In September 1932, Miss Webb spoke, as her husband had done a week or so earlier, to a Fabian

Summer School,
in the same month, she gave a talk under the
auspices of the
British Broadcasting Corporation In October,
they both
confided their experiences to the Labour Party
in conference
at Leicester In her broadcast address, Mrs
Webb summed
up in a very carefully written passage—

"Is the much talked of General Plan of the Soviet
Union a suc-
cess or a failure ? Even if I were competent to
give you an ade-